

Pittsburgh Steelers

Media Conference

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Mike Tomlin

Postgame Press Conference

Steelers 27, Broncos 19

MIKE TOMLIN: I'm appreciative of all the effort in all three phases to produce it. It was not without its challenges but that's what we expect on this Sunday, level of football, but we needed this one today. Obviously was a big one and the guys responded in a big way from start to finish. I just like the way we came out of the locker room and just continued to fight and complement one another.

The offense got started fast. We needed that. The defense supported the offense when we turned the ball over and got a stop and made them settle for a field goal. We needed that. We had not done that. We were able to finish strong at the end. Offensively drive the length of the feed, kick a field goal on defense.

Obviously get stout there with our backs up against it. Man it's a lot to build upon hopefully as we move forward but not looking big picture at all just what we were able to do today, I'm appreciative of that.

Had a couple of injuries, Devin Bush had a groin, Schuster as a shoulder injury. He's being evaluated at the hospital. A couple guys cramping and so forth, Najee, just the regular bumps and bruises associated with play.

I'll pause for questions.

Q. The power run game, is that something you felt you could do against this specific front?

MIKE TOMLIN: Again, it's not about the people we were playing and we kind of talked about that at the early portions of the week. I felt our running game coming together last week but because of the nature of how the game was unfolding we were not able to have the volume of runs to kind of reflect that. We minimized negativity a week ago. The power was falling forward. We had hats on hats and what we were able to do today was a continuation of that, and so hopefully that's encouraging from a big picture perspective.



Q. Kind of shows you how a quarterback has to have a short memory on stuff.

MIKE TOMLIN: Just young guys, you know, man, he stayed in the fight, man. Young guys, they are going to come after you. They going to get some plays. You going to have to make some plays. It's an education of a corner in the National Football League.

I appreciate his mentality. He was tough-minded about it and stayed in the fight. I appreciate some of the veteran leadership that he has and support that he has. A guy like Joe Haden talking you through those moments and helping you throw a football game is significant and I just can't say enough about Joe's efforts in terms of nurturing him and helping him grow in those ways as well.

Q. How important was it tracking down Williams in the long run to help you safe four points?

MIKE TOMLIN: Big time. Big-time hustle play.

Q. You talked last week about the absence of chunk plays but you were able to get some, how significant was it?

MIKE TOMLIN: It helps us, it eliminates execution and the less third downs you have to convert, so chunk plays when we are clicking, historically here, it's a component of our play and it was today and we needed it, and we're appreciative.

Q. What were you hoping to get out of that and it work?

MIKE TOMLIN: Dime personally defensively? We were just spreading Cam Sutton's work around among a group of people as opposed to putting it on one person. When you're playing with some guys that are working in expanded roles that still have their special teams responsibility, for example, it's good to spread the workload and that's simply what we were doing, leaning on the individual strengths in terms of their style of play but just largely spreading the work around in an effort to minimize the absence of Cam Sutton.

Q. In that package with Alex, T.J. and Melvin all in there at the same time,, what made you want to try that out?

MIKE TOMLIN: We know all three of those guys are rush capable but very rarely have we had all three guys going into a game or from a preparation of a game standpoint. I think Buffalo was the last time that we went into a game like that so that's something that we have been intent on get to go but you need a player availability to make that happen and so we had a good week with all three guys, talking about 90, 8 and 56, and we used all three of them on those possession downs in an effort to get a top-quality rush.

Q. How much success from that unit -- third down?

MIKE TOMLIN: It was rush and coverage. They were committed to protecting their passer. The running back and tight end was in a bunch on third down but we didn't mind that because if Fan is protecting and not running routes.. we were okay with that.

But it was a combination of both and largely it had to do because of how they chose to play. They were trying to neutralize our four-man rush with tight ends and running backs and so that gave us an advantage in the routes, if you will, seven versus three vertical runners and so we were able to win a lot of those possession downs.

Q. How much of a confidence booster was it for the offensive line keeping Ben upright and opening up holes?

MIKE TOMLIN: Time will tell that story.

Q. Ben called time out third-and-long, was it something he saw and something you saw when you came out of the time out?

MIKE TOMLIN: Yeah, but we are not going to deserving into the intimacies of the conversations that we had.

Q. It didn't look like you got exotic with Mille and yet you were able to contain him. Is that because you were running the ball, Von Miller?

MIKE TOMLIN: More than anything, you're not going to eliminate this guy. But you minimize him impact on the game by staying out of negative circumstance. Largely we were able to do that because we were running the ball. At times we got a negative circumstances because of penalties, penalty here, false start, holding, things of that nature. That's when we were really in danger to be honest

you when we were behind chains. We work really hard to just stay out of them circumstances first and foremost.

Q. Your offense was seven and 12 on third downs and a lot of big conversions especially from Ben, what went into their success?

MIKE TOMLIN: Like I mentioned, we were on schedule. If you look at the down and distances on those conversions, they were very manageable.

Q. Looking at Najee, the season as a whole how he's been able to build, what do you like about his evolution as a rookie?

MIKE TOMLIN: Just like I talked about on Wednesday, he's getting better every week but I think that's a reasonable expectation. We are talking about a guy who has some talent, obviously, but who is getting acclimated to the professional game, learning what the experience is, what it is, he's a sharp guy and he's learning quickly. So it's reasonable to expect him to continue to put together, increasingly better performances, particularly in the short term.

Q. Fez (ph) didn't do a whole lot today. What went into that?

MIKE TOMLIN: They chose to protect the pocket with him, especially on those possession downs, if you go down and look at third downs, oftentimes he was in the core and off the ball and we identified that as protection first. So he wasn't getting out clean.

And so you've got to make decisions from time to time, and so you know, they came into this game with a quarterback that was coming out of the protocol and they got sacked five times last week. I think they got seven times last time they were here. So they made some decisions; we expected them to and so that comes at a cost. It's risk/reward.

Q. Can you point to one thing offensively that allowed you that success today?

MIKE TOMLIN: I just thought we played better. We played more efficiently like we've been talking about. If you could pinpoint one thing, would have solved this problem weeks ago.

Q. Was it anything Denver did in the fourth quarter that allowed them to get in?

MIKE TOMLIN: Big play.

Q. After the frustration of the last three weeks, how confident are you to use this as a springboard?

MIKE TOMLIN: Time will tell the story. We are appreciative of the efforts and the win we got today. But those type of perspectives and things of that nature will be revealed to us as we continue to play.

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